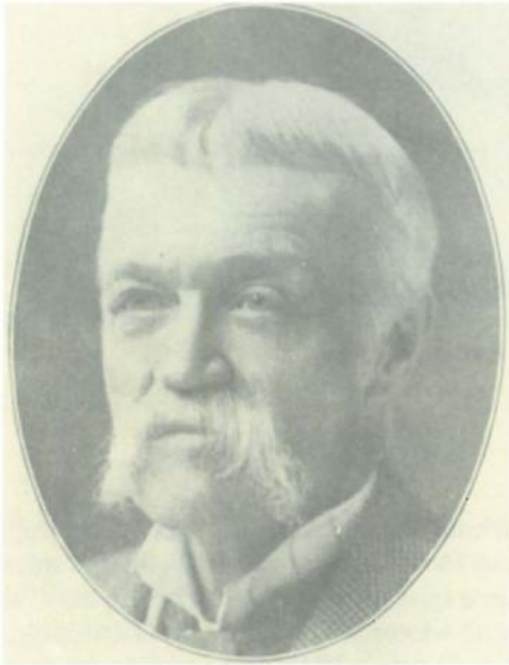


A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Maine



Furness, Evans, and Company



Frank Furness

The Philadelphia architectural firm of Furness, Evans and Company designed at least seven Maine buildings after 1885. One of its partners, William Masters Camac (1852-1918), a longtime summer resident of Bar Harbor, is credited with five of the seven: "Stanwood," the James G. Blaine Cottage, 1885-86, and the H. C. Hart Cottage, 1886, both in Bar Harbor and both demolished, a pair of commercial buildings for Dr. Rogers and the Dunbar Brothers on Main Street, Bar Harbor, 1886-87, both altered, and the surviving church of Our Father at Hull's Cove, 1890-91. The firm itself, or its principal, is mentioned in connection with the remaining two buildings: the Professor W. W. Frazier Cottage at Northeast Harbor, 1895, destroyed, and "Thingvalla," the Henry R. Hatfield Cottage, Bar Harbor, 1900-01, also destroyed. These latter designs date from a period in which Camac is unaccountably unlisted in the Philadelphia directories.



Figure 1. Stanwood, James G. Blaine Cottage, Bar Harbor, c. 1886 view (Courtesy of Bar Harbor Historical Society).



Figure 2. Stanwood, James G. Blaine Cottage, Bar Harbor, c. 1886 view (MHPC).

Furness, Evans and Company was created in 1885 when a number of draftsmen, including William Camac, were taken into the existing partnership of Frank Furness (1839-1912) and Allen Evans (1849-1925). Furness was one of the foremost picturesque eclectic architects of the post-Civil War era, alone or in partnership with Evans and others turning out such distinguished and historically important works as The Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 1871-76, the Provident Life and Trust Company Building, 1876 and the Library for the University of Pennsylvania, 1888-1891, all in Philadelphia. By the early 1890s he had begun gradually to turn over design responsibility to his associates.¹

William Camac, a "gentleman architect," was educated privately and at the University of Pennsylvania. He traveled abroad and then entered the Furness and Evans office, perhaps as early as 1882 (although directories list this affiliation only for 1886 and 1891; he disappears altogether from 1895 to 1909).²

A native of Pennsylvania, James G. Blaine married Harriet Stanwood of Augusta in 1850. He worked his way up the ladder of elective office until, in 1884, he ran as the Republican nominee for President, narrowly losing to Grover Cleveland. Thereafter he served as Secretary of State under both Presidents Garfield and Harrison. For this personally attractive

but politically controversial figure, according to the *Mt. Desert Herald* of September 10, 1885, Camac was to design a two story cottage to be erected "during the coming winter." The house on Highbrooke Road burned in October 1947, but judging from surviving photographs and a second notice in the *Herald* for January 1, 1886, Camac actually produced a three story shingle and granite residence with pronounced Queen Anne details such as the multiple gables and corner bartizan, all resting upon a rough stone base opened by a broad, segmental arch (Figures 1 and 2). On axis with this feature at the ground floor level was an echoing arch, the tympanum infilled with what appears to be a motif of sunflowers.³ These were decorative forms common to the era, and the Furness firm was to use them soon again at the University of Pennsylvania Library.

The Blaine Cottage, known as "Stanwood", slightly antedated that for Philadelphian H. C. Hart, whose "handsome summer residence" on Eagle Lake Road was noticed by the *Herald* on April 9, 1886. Like Stanwood (and most other seaside seasonal abodes of the era), the Hart Cottage sported piazzas, a tower, stone foundation, and in the interior a large hall, but the absence of photographs makes it impossible to be certain of specific details. It is probably safe to guess that here too Camac used the Queen Anne mode as he did again in the adja-



Figure 3. Rogers Block, left, and Dunbar Block, center, Bar Harbor, c. 1910 view (MHPC).

cent commercial buildings on Main Street in Bar Harbor (Figure 3).⁴ Camac obviously found such Anglophile usage proper for the Maine coast, and he was to look to English inspiration for the little church at nearby Hull's Cove as well (Figure 4).

The September, 1891, issue of the Diocesan monthly *The North East* names Camac the architect "who has devised" the new Episcopal Church of Our Father. A small stone structure with bell gable, asymmetrical entry, and Gothic details, the building fits well within the tradition of Anglican architecture that arose with the early days of the Gothic Revival in the 1840s.⁵

The W. W. Frazier Cottage at Northeast Harbor is mentioned in Bangor's *Industrial Journal* of September 13, 1895 as to be built from designs of "Mr. Furnis." Photographs represent it as a broad, seaside Shingle Style building with ashlar piers and chimneys and superimposed porches overlooking the water (Figure 5). It, too, burned in 1947.

"Thingvalla", the Kebo Road Cottage of H. R. Hatfield of Philadelphia, was pulled down in 1945, and no photographs have surfaced. There does exist a brief description in the *Bar Harbor Record* which suggests that it was stylistically related to the rustic mode of the turn of the century named after the sum-

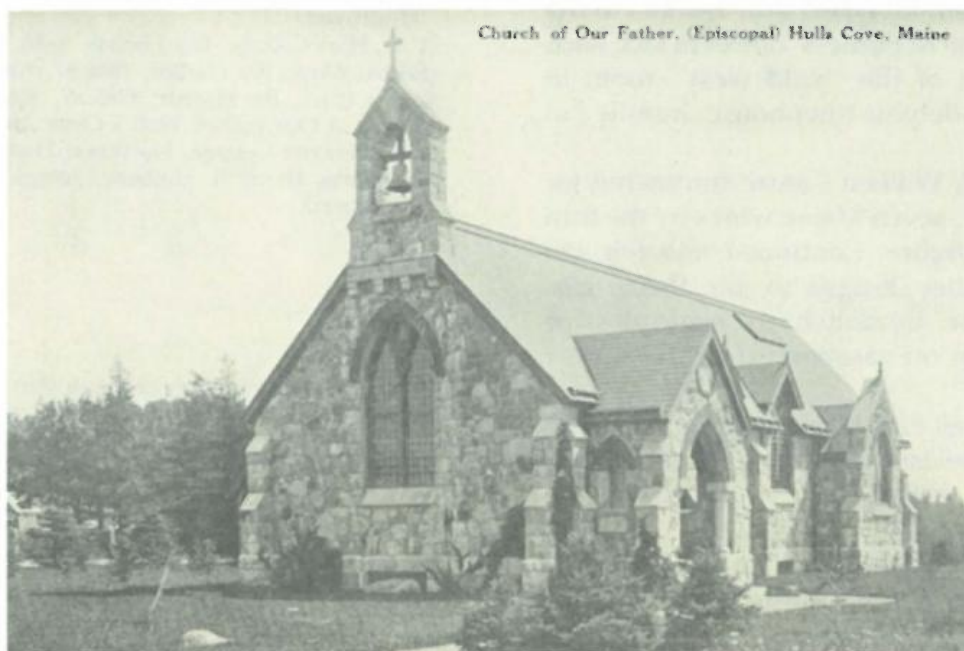


Figure 4. Church of Our Father, Hull's Cove, 1912 view (MHPC).



Figure 5. W. W. Frazier Cottage, Northeast Harbor, c. 1896 view (Courtesy of Northeast Harbor Library).

mer camps of the Adirondacks. According to the paper, among the new local cottages "none [is] more odd and picturesque" than Hatfield's. The two stone chimneys "are built of the common field stone in their [sic] natural shapes," as are the foundation walls. "The entrance porch, balconies and verandas are supported by cedar posts, from which the knots stand out prominently and the builders received careful instructions that no bark should be removed." The entrance hall is "finished up to a height of about three feet with the natural cedar posts—with the bark left on, set closely together." Each of the nine fireplaces "is left in the rough brick finish, yet each presents a different style of building."⁶ Such remarks, however vague, suggest the exaggeration of the shingle mode that was the Adirondack style, but they also bear witness to the continued eclecticism of Furness' office. In fact, such details recall those of the "wild west" room in Furness' own Philadelphia townhouse, installed in the early 1880s.

If, as we are told, William Camac summered for years at Bar Harbor, seven Maine works by the firm seems too small a figure. Continued research will probably reveal other designs to join these, alas mostly altered or demolished, examples of Philadelphia design on vacation.

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June, 1985

NOTES

- ¹ James F. O'Gorman et al, *The Architecture of Frank Furness*, Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973. All but the Blaine cottage are additions to the checklist of buildings designed by Furness's firm.
- ² Sandra L. Tatman and Roger W. Moss, *Biographical Dictionary of Philadelphia Architects, 1700-1930*, Boston: G. K. Hall, 1985.
- ³ G. W. Helfrich and Gladys O'Neil, *Lost Bar Harbor*, Camden: Downeast Books, 1982, p.46.
- ⁴ *Mt. Desert Herald*, October 29, 1886, and *Bar Harbor Record*, June 9, 1887.
- ⁵ *One Hundredth Anniversary of the Diocese of Maine, 1820-1920*, Gardiner, 1920, p. 133.
- ⁶ *Bar Harbor Record*, June 5, 1901, p.1, c. 3-4.

LIST OF KNOWN COMMISSIONS IN MAINE BY FURNESS, EVANS AND COMPANY

Stanwood, James G. Blaine Cottage, Bar Harbor, 1885-86, Destroyed.
H. C. Hart Cottage, Bar Harbor, 1886, Destroyed.
Dunbar Block, Bar Harbor, 1886-87, Altered.
Rogers Block, Bar Harbor, 1886-87, Altered.
Church of Our Father, Hull's Cove, 1890-91, Extant.
W. W. Frazier Cottage, Northeast Harbor, 1895, Destroyed.
Thingvalla, Henry R. Hatfield Cottage, Bar Harbor, 1900-01, Destroyed.

Photograph of Frank Furness from
Philadelphia and Notable Philadelphians
by Moses King, 1902

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